

## OntarioWineReview

A bi-weekly newsletter dedicated to helping you discover Ontario's best Wines and Wineries.  
Enjoyment comes from understanding - Passion comes from understanding more.



**OntarioWineReview Newsletter – 65**  
**September 13, 2007**

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### OntarioWineReview: *New York State of Mind – part 2 (Festival Edition)*

Recently I attended the [Finger Lakes Wine Festival](#), my third time in 5 years, and each time I go I am struck by the differences when comparing their festival to anything we do on this side of the border (Ontario). At this year's version of the Festival, 98 individual wineries attended, filling up 3 long tents, each containing 3 rows (middle, left and right) ... that's a lot of wineries. I have been to many Ontario festivals, shows and expos and never have I seen so many actual wineries participated – both local and international combined. Wineries at the Finger Lakes Festival came from all over New York State to pour and *sell* their wines. You read that correctly: *SELL* their wines. Imagine going to Taste the County, Fiesta Buckhorn, the Shores of Erie Wine Festival or the Niagara Wine Festival in Montebello Park and being able to buy the wine you liked directly from the winery's booth to take home. Good idea you say, but then I have to lug the wine around with me ... ah, not so. At the Finger Lakes Wine Festival, they give you a sheet of neon orange stickers – one goes on your wine purchase, the other is your claim check ... a cart continuously goes around the festival picking up wine purchases and dropping them off at a central point or "Pick up Purchase Here" booth located near the exit (after you pass through the main gate you walk another 30 feet and around a corner and you're there – you could even park a van out front if needed). Let me reiterate this: you can buy the wine directly from the winery booth. Do you get what this means for everyone involved?

The Winery – Ever noticed that everyone else at a wine show can sell their wares except for the wineries – the main reason you're there in the first place. That's probably one of the reasons why lately there has been a drop in attendance at some of these festivals by individual wineries, because there really is very little incentive for them to attend. A winery participates, pours wine, gets their name out there – but then it's now up to the consumer to remember the winery, make notes of the wine they liked, and eventually make their way to the winery. I suspect that the return rate is probably well below 10%. Sometimes an event happens at a winery (for example Archibald's Fruit Wine Festival), but only the host winery makes any money, because they can sell their wine – no one else can. Why should I, as a winery, attend the event? Sure, the attending wineries get some money back for their pourings through the tickets they collect (that's why we pay for wine with tickets); but think how much more wineries would benefit if they could sell the wine right there: no promise of shipping (or them having to eat the cost of it), no broken or forgotten promises by the consumer to visit "one day". Wineries would pour wine and then sell wine. At the Finger Lakes there are no tickets ... but then again, what they pour they can sell. Everybody would make out okay: the government gets their share through taxes; you get the wine you like to take home immediately; the winery sells their wine thereby making money directly from their pouring. Win/Win/Win.

The Event / Organizer – This now becomes a domino effect ... because the wineries can sell wine they'll want to attend the event, meaning more wineries want in – which equals a bigger event. Promoters would have to turn exhibitors away because they sell out of booths (having to expand the venue next year); instead with the way it is now, promoters sometimes offer bigger booths for less money as the show date nears, thus making the event appear fuller, when in actuality, there are less exhibitors than the previous year. The New York way, attendance goes way up for both exhibitors and attendees (because they can now buy the product they are tasting). Revenue goes up ... the following year they have a bigger event ... more wineries want to attend ... and the dominos continue to fall. Government gets their tax share; promoters get better attendance in exhibitors and attendees; attendees can buy the wines and take them home immediately. Win/Win/Win.

The Attendees – I'm sure you see where I am going with this because the domino effect becomes circular at this point. Attendees can buy wine: if they like it they can buy it on the spot – period the end. No writing down the name of the wine or winery, no losing the note in your pocket or the wash, no having to say "honey remember that wine we had at Buckhorn..." You like it, you buy it, you take it home, you enjoy it ... no muss, no fuss. Government gets their share. Winery gets their share. You can go home and share. Win/Win/Win.

So what's the drawback? Somebody tell me? Please somebody voice a dissenting opinion about why we can't sell Ontario wine at Ontario wine events like they do in the Finger Lakes.



**Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: Viognier and Barrel Aged Cabernet**

Visit the winery or their website for more details or to purchase these great wines.

Smith and Wilson Estate Wines 2006 Viognier - \$12.00

[www.smithandwilsonestatewines.ca](http://www.smithandwilsonestatewines.ca)

While some yahoo out in Niagara believes he can get \$49 for his 2006 Viognier, let me tell you there's a better option for much less money; the one drawback is its further away from Niagara – not such a drawback if you're in the area or willing to make the drive. In Blenheim, 50km east of Leamington, lies Smith and Wilson, and they make the only Viognier in the Lake Erie North Shore area, from their own 4 year old vines. An aromatic white that has luscious apple and peach on the nose with flavours of white peaches, apples, pears and a whole lotta pineapple. This was their first go at making it and it truly is a wonderfully delicious wine made only in stainless steel to preserve that fruity-freshness.

Colio Estate Wines 2005 CEV Barrel Aged Cabernet Sauvignon - \$21.95

[www.coliowines.com](http://www.coliowines.com)

Christmas has come early at Colio ... this is a magnificent offering from this Lake Erie North Shore Winery, lots of bright red fruit, cinnamon and vanilla on the nose. Before I go further let me tell you this wine rested for 18 months in French and Hungarian oak (with a minimal amount of American wood thrown in). Back to the wine review: silky rich tannins envelop the blackberries and oakiness that are still quite prevalent ... and is this wine ever smooth going through the mouth. Let's pause again for this sidebar: the fruit was naturally thinned to 2 tonnes per acre "we had nothing to do with that" Tim Reilly, winemaker, told me, "it was all Mother Nature's decision." And now, the finale: Wait for it ... the finish is unmistakable: cherries and chocolate ... oooo mama what a tasty little sucker this is. And there should be some good ageing potential here, say about 7 years or more. What's more, this is the baby – the CEV Merlot and Franc show even better ... can't wait.

Wines available at the winery – Colio also available through [WineryToHome](#).

**Summer Selection:**

Every newsletter throughout the summer, I will recommend great summer-sippers to make the most of your patio, cottage or boat – click on the link below to read this week's picks:

[Colchester Ridge Estate Winery 2006 Gewurztraminer - \\$14.95](#)

[Sprucewood Shores Estate Winery 2006 Pinot Gris - \\$13.95](#)

[Viewpoint Estate Winery 2005 Riesling - \\$14.95](#)

All currently available from the winery only

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**Weekly Wine Notes and More**

The Grape Guy presents the "Weekly Wine Note"! A savoury selection of Ontario wines to impress, enjoy, or just plain drink! A NEW Wine Selection is added to <http://ontariowinereviews.blogspot.com> every Tuesday or listen to the Podcast at [www.ontariowinereview.libsyn.com](http://www.ontariowinereview.libsyn.com).

Here are the [Weekly Wine Notes](#) that were added to the Blog over the past two weeks:

Smith and Wilson 2005 Double Barrel ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

Creekside Estate 2006 Butler's Grant Riesling ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

There are some new report in the [On the Road with the Grape Guy](#) section:  
[Preview Tasting for the Australian Wine Show](#)  
[Shores of Erie International Wine Festival](#)

The September 15<sup>th</sup> LCBO Vintages Release report is available here:  
[Ontario "Vintages" Releases: Saturday September 15, 2007 Vintages Release](#)



**Uncorked and Decanted:** *Nifty gadgets, accessories and other things that enhance wine enjoyment*

#### STORViNO

So do I date myself by talking about LP records and the milk crates we used to store them in? Am I bringing many of you back to a simpler time? I was going to say that if you're old enough to drink you should remember the LP, but the CD just turned 25 (that's years folks) – or something crazy like that, so that means there are some drinkers out there who have never known the pop, hiss and crackle that accompanied Pink Floyd, The Doobie Brothers or the Who – I'm talkin' 'bout that other generation here (I'll let your parents explain that one to those of you that didn't get it). But as usual I'm a bit off topic here ... what I want to do is re-focus your attention back to those milk crates. I was just introduced to a new take on the old milk crate – but instead of storing milk or records they are storing wine, in crates that are half the size: they call it, STORViNO.

STORViNO is sub-divided into 6 sections, which holds surprising-surprise, 6 bottles of wine, they are sturdy, stackable, easily portable and come in a cool burgundy colour (with potentially more colours on the way?). They can be stacked length-wise or width-wise; and the bonus of stacking them lengthwise is that you get to use your corks, which fit into specially designed holes to hold the crates together. I am told that another use for these little half-size crates is to transport empty bottles back to the beer store for your refund; but I think I would just-as-soon leave them in place right where they are and use the cardboard boxes for transportation. I suppose they could be used to transport wine to a party ... but don't forget to bring back the totes, you won't want to leave these little suckers anywhere; at \$21.95 I find them a little pricey for holding just 6 bottles; but they do look good doing it. To find out more about STORViNO check out [www.storvino.com](http://www.storvino.com).



**Wine Event Spotlight:** *Niagara Wine Festival ... Taste! winner ... Ticket Giveaway*

The 56<sup>th</sup> Niagara Wine Festival is set to go (September 21 to 30) and there are hundreds of events happening all within the course of a 10 day period (including 2 weekends). Take advantage of winery tours and tastings, concerts, Niagara cuisine, artisan shows, wine seminars, family entertainment and one of Canada's largest street parades as it winds its way through St. Catharines and into Montebello Park where the main festival takes place. Once again, Discovery Passports are the best way to see what is happening at each winery with a variety of tastings, flights, comparatives, you name it. And many wineries will be sampling their wares in the park. More information about the festival can be found at [www.niagarawinefestival.com](http://www.niagarawinefestival.com).

**Ticket Giveaway:** Here we go again ... for the 56<sup>th</sup> time Niagara is going to have themselves a Wine Festival. You read about it above now it's time to think about going. You can save yourself the agony, heartbreak and disappointment and just click over to their website right now [www.niagarawinefestival.com](http://www.niagarawinefestival.com) and order your tickets; or pick up the phone and make the call for tickets; or you can test your luck and enter for your chance to pick up my lone pair of Discovery Passports. All you have to do to have a chance to walk-away with them (actually they'll be mailed to you) is send me your name, address (with postal code), and phone number along with the name of your favourite Niagara winery ... put "Festive-Us" in the subject line and send the whole kit and caboodle to me at [michael@ontariowinereview.com](mailto:michael@ontariowinereview.com). One lucky entrant will win the pair of passes I have sitting on my desk. Entries must be received by 11:59pm on Monday September 17 to be eligible to win.

**Ticket Winner:** Taste! the County is coming ... last time out I wanted to find out how many of you wanted to Taste the County this October – and many of you did. A current poll on the website has Prince Edward County marginally ahead of all the other regions here at home and around the world, as the "[most want to visit region this summer](#)". And now one lucky reader is going to do just that. Congratulations to Donna Abrams (Toronto); you will be going to Prince Edward County on October 6 for Taste! To find out how you can get your own tickets visit [www.taste.thecounty.ca](http://www.taste.thecounty.ca) - hope to see you there.

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**OntarioWineReview**'s bi-weekly newsletter is devoted to the love, enjoyment and promotion of the wines of Ontario and the wineries that make them.



**What can the Grape Guy do for you ...** Michael Pinkus (Grape Guy) provides a variety of wine related services that you might be interested in taking advantage of: he gives lectures, leads seminars, conducts tastings, sets up tours; consults, selects and judges. He also gives interviews, broadcasts, podcasts and writes. [Contact the Grape Guy if you require any of these services or have any questions.](#)



**Psst, Pass It On ...** keep the good wine flowing. Forward this newsletter to your mom in Mimico your uncle in Uxbridge, your great aunt in Grand Bend or any other family member or loved one that you know needs good wine advice.

To contact us with feedback, article ideas, comments, concerns or questions – email [michael@ontariowinereview.com](mailto:michael@ontariowinereview.com), we look forward to hearing from you!

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